

NOTE ON NAUTILUS REPERTUS AND NAUTILUS SCROBICULATUS

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A. R. Riddle (1920) published a paper in these Transactions entitled "An Adventitious Occurrence of *Nautilus pompilius* Linné". The Nautilus referred to was taken by Mr. James Scott of Yorketown at Foul Bay, Southern Yorke Peninsula, opposite what is locally known as the Old Mill. The animal was intact and the specimen fresh.

Riddle was somewhat at a loss to explain how the *Nautilus pompilius*, an inhabitant of Northern and North-east Australia, could find its way against the current passing West to East in Bass Strait. For 37 years authorities have cast doubt on the authenticity of this record, one stating as recently as 1944, while describing *Nautilus alumnus* from North Queensland, "There is a record of a living specimen from Yorke's Peninsula, South Australia, A. R. Riddle, 1920, which is not acceptable". A full discussion on this occurrence is published by Cotton (1957), where the actual shell is figured for the first time.

This unique specimen was donated recently to the South Australian Museum by Percy Scott, a relative of the finder.

The shell is a giant, measuring 9 in. in major diameter and proves to be the large species *Nautilus repertus*, from South-western Australia.

When the Nautilus was exhibited it was explained that the specimen had evidently drifted along the southern coast and become stranded on Southern Yorke Peninsula.

Following this exhibit, Mrs. E. V. Wilson brought along to the Museum for examination a second specimen taken on Yorke Peninsula by F. Michaelmore, exact locality unknown. This proved to be a juvenile *Nautilus repertus*, six inches in diameter.

It is hoped that these remarks will effectively vindicate A. R. Riddle's record published in these Transactions 37 years ago.

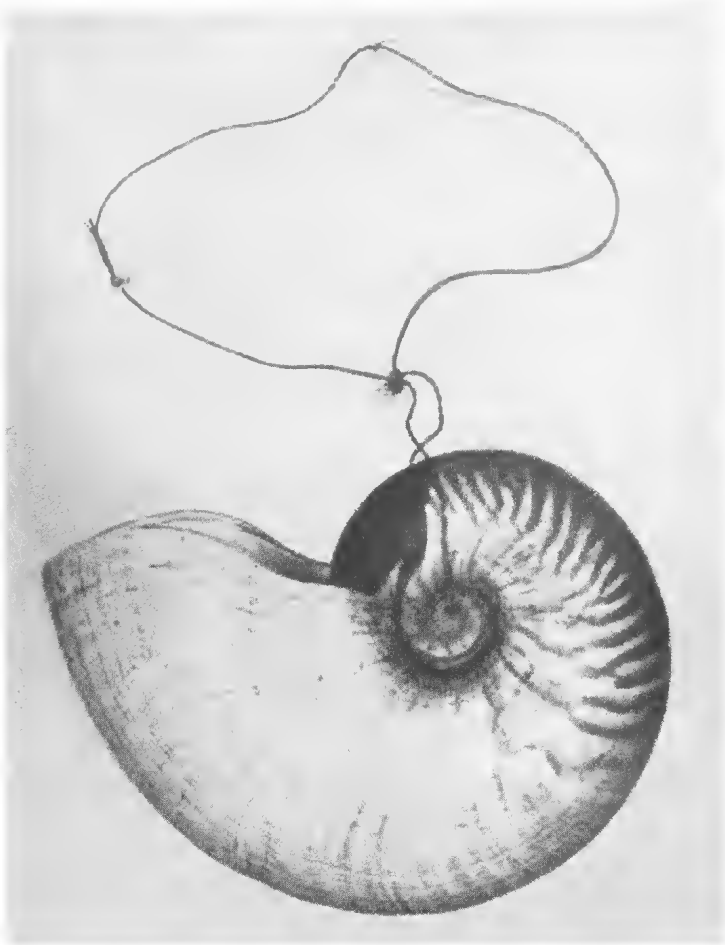
The Rev. H. K. Bartlett has a specimen of *Nautilus scrobiculatus* taken at Brooker Island, south-east of Papua, purchased from an old man, living in the only village on the island.

The shell is suspended by pandanus palm fibre string passing through the minute chink, always present in the centre of the wide umbilicus of the shell. This species of *Nautilus* is used as an ornament, cup, or container by the older men of the tribe. It is suspended over the fire-tray in the house and usually shows smoke stains.

No further information could be obtained on the significance of this ornament. The actual specimen in the Rev. Bartlett's collection is figured here (see Plate 1).

REFERENCES

- COTTON, B. C., 1957. Rec. S. Aust. Mus., 13 (1), 117-120.
RIDDLE, A. R., 1920. Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Aust., 44, 257-261.



Shell of *Nautilus scrobiculatus* from Brooker Island, S.-E. of
Papua, locally used as an ornament.